

DIRTY TRICKS AND ALL

*Yes, Virginia, CIA has a Department of Dirty Tricks.
If it didn't we should all be sleeping less
soundly tonight. The author takes us beyond the scare
headlines to where the action is, and should be*

The Unmentionable Uses of a CIA

MILES COPELAND

DEAR BILL: I did as I said I would: I went out to those intimidating headquarters buildings of the CIA in Langley, Virginia, and got the party line from the public relations and legal offices. Then I had "not for attribution" interviews with a cross-section of the Agency's top officials, and ran down various old friends who are "intelligence community" insiders and who were willing to exchange confidences—sort of a "private opinion survey," you might say. Finally, presuming on my alumnus status and the fact that I still pass for an expert on several subjects of particular interest to the Agency, I got myself invited to lunch and an afternoon of briefing at the highly secret offices of "Mother," our old friend who now manages "miscellaneous projects," one of which is OCTOPUS, the huge computer which builds profiles of you, me, Daniel Ellsberg, Senator Goldwater, Billy Graham, Allen Ginsberg, John Wayne, Jane Fonda, B. F. Skinner, Vice President Agnew, and millions of other persons who are "in the public eye," as I believe Mr. Haldeman put it.

Mother's office is also the command post for worldwide counterterrorist activity, and for amassing data on "the people's war against imperialism and capitalism," which is behind that part of the terrorism directly endangering the security of the United States. Since Mother has managed to get the cooperation of non-Communist security agencies everywhere, including many "anti-American" ones, his office is un-



questionably *the* world's central library for information on politically motivated terrorism. As you would expect, this makes it also the world's principal supply base for the electronic gadgetry used by these security agencies for making secret tape recordings, surreptitiously taking motion pictures of terrorists and supporters of terrorists, and "ringing" the especially important ones (i.e., installing in their anatomies certain minute substances which emit traceable radio signals). It is truly a science-fiction establishment.

In an odd way, Mother himself seems a science-fiction figure—lean, deeply suntanned, grey-haired but ageless (I think I heard somewhere that he is just sixty, but he could be forty—or seventy), expensively tweeded (with those leather elbow patches which be-

Dulles), and speaking the precise English of a visitor from another planet who has been computer-programed to look, act, and speak as some intergalactic intelligence would imagine of an officer in his position. His office matches: hunting-lodge motif, with a huge fireplace topped by a portrait of Lyman Kirkpatrick done by Nicholas Egon, leather chairs and sofas, trophies on the walls, and a beautifully beamed sloping ceiling at least twenty feet from the floor at the upper end. (I presume it's a penthouse, although there is no way of telling since the private elevator gives no indication of the floors it passes on the way up, and the large picture windows are fake, beyond which lies what appears to be real daylight until Mother presses a switch to throw a color slide on the far wall and it slowly dims to darkness.) A scrawny greyhound sits by Mother's armchair, chewing on a black fedora which, I was told, was left in Allen Dulles' office twenty years ago by Cardinal Spellman.

The lunch was nothing to rave about—a ballottine of duck with an herbed orange jelly, followed by aspic of fruits de mer, sauce verte, then truffled chicken Kiev with braised endives, then grapefruit sorbet with Izarra for dessert (the wine served throughout was a Ksara rosé, part of a shipment Mother had just received from the Lebanese *chef de Sûreté*)—but there was a fine cognac with the coffee, which relaxed the guests and made them—well, you couldn't say "talkative" but at least *communicative* within the limits of the rules for "calculated indiscretion" that guide members of the CIA cabal when they talk to outsiders.

Around the luncheon table there were Mother, sitting at the end as host, "the Kingfish," "Jojo," "Dandelion,"

Mr. Copeland, author of the very controversial *The Game of Nations*, has spent much of his working life in the Middle East, in various capacities.

"Lady Windermere," "Wiz," "the Oz-zard of Wiz," and two faceless gentlemen who were not important enough or long enough in the service to have anything but ordinary proper names, which I missed. The nicknames show no signs of disappearing, by the way, despite persisting opposition from Personnel, Management, and Security. They are indispensable, Mother says, 1) to dazzle the young officers, 2) to confuse the management experts who are constantly plugging for a more conventional organizational structure, and 3) to give a "low profile" to the real identities of cabal members. Number three is especially important at the moment. It happens that not one single member of the CIA's inner circle has been correctly identified by Jack Anderson or anyone else in connection with his real functions in the Agency.

Mother's colleagues at the table were decidedly not suggestive of science fiction. Except for Jojo and Lady Windermere, who are obvious old-time Washington socialites, the CIA's top "dirty tricks" specialists look exactly like the frustrated liberal intellectuals they in fact are. From innuendos sprinkled through their conversation, it is clear that they would like to be overturning Greek colonels, sabotaging the Portuguese in Africa, and bribing Allende away from his Soviet backers instead of doing the opposite—as is dictated by the circumstances they know about from their secret information. They share the liberal view that the more things you are ashamed of the more respectable you are, but that is as far as it goes.

Take Chile . . .

Whatever their political orientation, they are all appalled at the Watergate affair—if anything, the few conservatives among them more than the others. "We can't even *understand* what the press says about us," Jojo complained. "The headlines say we did horrible things; the articles that follow say we didn't."

For example, *U.S. News & World Report* started an article by asking, "How was the Central Intelligence Agency drawn into a web of domestic political intrigue?" and then went on to make it perfectly clear that the CIA was not drawn into anything. The article said, "White House officials attempted to get CIA cooperation in

concealment of one aspect of the Watergate case" and "a White House aide tried *unsuccessfully* to persuade the CIA to put up bail and salary money for the seven men arrested for the break-in and bugging of Democratic national headquarters." (The italics are mine, to reflect rises in the voice of Jojo as he read the article.) It then said, "a convicted conspirator has testified that he was pressured to agree to a plan to blame the CIA for the Watergate plot," but it gave no indication that the CIA fell in with the plan or even knew about it. The rest of the article could have been written by Angus Thuermer, the CIA's public-relations officer. It was as lucid an explanation as it is possible to write of how the CIA resisted pressures from the White House and elsewhere.

What seemed to bother my old friends more than anything else was the way the press had been attacking the Agency for the wrong things. "There are articles which fuss about our having done certain things, when they should be fussing about our *not* having done them," said Jojo. "Take Chile, for example."

Everyone nodded sympathetically, feeling no need for elaboration. Agency people assume that it is the duty of the United States Government to back candidates who run against Soviet-backed candidates, in Chile or in any other country where we have legitimate and important interests, and that it shouldn't wait for some commercial concern to remind it of the fact. It happens, though, that the CIA did *not* back candidates in the Chilean elections as it was "accused" of doing, although the Soviets did—to the tune of some \$8 million in "miscellaneous costs," as contrasted with the \$2 million that ITT executives believed would be enough to bring in a not-anti-American president. The Soviet-backed presidential candidate won out and immediately launched a program of socialist "reforms," which are having the same devastating results in Chile that they have had in all other countries that have tried them. I asked, "But didn't the CIA, as the press says, have plans of its own for sabotaging the economy so as to embarrass Allende?" Silly question. "Our operations," said Jojo, "are always short term squeezes and they never do real harm. If we were out to ruin Chile we couldn't improve on what Allende is doing without our help."

The charges against the CIA are that it: 1) loaned a wig and other items, all of which could easily have been bought by anyone on Washington's New York Avenue—but did so on orders from the White House, and without knowing what the items were to be used for; 2) gave information to the Justice Department which was later passed on to CREEP for internal purposes—but as a normal transaction with the Justice Department, and without any understanding of what the Justice Department intended to do with the information; 3) *discussed* with the FBI the White House's belief that it should call off investigation of the campaign funds which had been "laundered" through Mexico—but explicitly recommended that it do no such thing; 4) *discussed* the possible use of CIA funds to provide bail for the Watergate men—but refused; 5) provided the FBI with a "psychological profile" of Daniel Ellsberg—which is so trivial a matter as to be beneath discussion, despite the fact that both Dick Helms and his ultimate successor, Bill Colby, later said that such an act was "ill advised." Mother and the others have been involved in intergovernment and intra-government intrigues all over the world, and they are old-timers in the Battle of Washington, so you would think they were beyond shock and surprise. But I think they are honestly bewildered as to what all the fuss is about.

Good-Will Activities

Most bewildering is the crescendo of complaints over long-standing actions which have been missed until now, but which Watergate has caused to be dug up. Training policemen, for example. The CIA has more counterterrorist know-how than any government agency in the world—it can even be argued that it has more than all other agencies put together, since it pools experiences and information drawn from most of them—and it would seem to be in the public interest for this know-how to be made available to as wide a range of law-enforcement organizations, at least American ones, as can be reached. There is no suggestion that the CIA is trying to gain control over these organizations, or to influence them in any way, or to depart from the law that prohibits the CIA from engaging in operations inside the U.S. All the same, various demagogues in Congress are

demanding that this good-will activity of the Agency be looked into—and ended. “I realize we’re living in an age when supposedly reputable people can object to the new Director of the FBI on the grounds that he is a law-and-order man,” said Mother, “but what can be the motives of a congressman who doesn’t want the police to get the best counterterrorism training possible?”

When it comes to the question of training foreign police and security officials, the Agency is in a more serious dilemma. It is officially recognized that the CIA is to have an international espionage and counterespionage service, and there has been no serious suggestion that it be disbanded. Yet every time a report reaches the public that even remotely suggests that such a service is in existence, the outcry of the American press exceeds even that of the Soviets. For this reason, the Agency has slowly shifted to what any reasonable observer might regard as a totally liberal position: It now encourages free countries to look after their own security affairs, and gives them the means to do so, without insisting that they run their governments *our* way. “It is a chameleon sort of policy,” Mother confessed, “but no one can say it’s imperialist—or rather, you wouldn’t think anyone could say it’s imperialist.”

The policy has only recently become a rather touchy subject. Formerly the CIA relied on cozy little deals with *sections* of local security agencies—in Africa, Asia, and South America—to round out its international surveillance capability. The chiefs of the sections were CIA agents; Members of the sections carried out their duties thinking they were acting in the interest of their own governments. When the late President Nasser of Egypt decided to seek out the CIA agents who had made it possible for the American ambassador to warn him of an assassination plot against him, he turned to the very section which was working for the CIA—and which solved the problem by framing a number of Interior Department officials who had been inconveniencing CIA operations. Sometimes, by special off-the-record agreements, local security officials simply turn their backs, as in the case of the chief of security of an anti-American Arab government who showed great indignation at a CIA representative’s suggestion that he should cooperate officially. “I suppose you know that my office will be unguarded from midnight tonight until 6 A.M. tomorrow; fascist pig that you are, you will undoubtedly send in your men to photocopy my files.”

Such arrangements were quite enough for CIA purposes until the airplane hijackings started, along with the increase in murders and kidnappings of diplomats. It now became advisable for the U.S. Government, through the CIA, to get a degree of *admitted* cooperation from the governments where terrorist organizations were based. Until this need arose, the CIA could conceal the fact that it was dealing with obnoxious military dictatorships, Arab governments outspokenly hostile to our friend Israel, and nabobs farther east who habitually bought political time by professing anti-American sentiments. The new policy dictated that many of these odd friendships be surfaced.

Countering Terror

Enough surfaced, that is, for fringe employees of the intelligence community to hear about them and to leak reports of them to crusading journalists. Yes, the U.S. Government, through the CIA, is secretly on friendly terms with the Greek colonels, the white governments of Rhodesia and South Africa, and the Portuguese in Africa—and, at the same time, with various oppressive black regimes in Africa, with the Egyptians, and with “Greek colonels” in many countries of the Third World. Yes, in the security field the U.S. Government is following a “chameleon policy,” similar to the one found so reprehensible in ITT. The justification is simply that its planners can’t figure any way it can afford *not* to be on friendly terms with these governments. It cannot do without their facilities. The terrorists of the world are shaping up as the most formidable enemy this country has ever had. The international character of terrorist organizations is nearing a stage where they will be able to deny our access to certain materials we’ve got to have for maintenance not only of military defenses but of our day-to-day peacetime economy. My Agency friends say that this threat is easily the most serious one our country has ever faced—far more serious, for example, than the threat of an atomic war, but the danger of

our losing access to essential materials is “almost a probability”—a CIA evaluator’s way of saying that it’s nearing the level of a fifty-fifty chance.

This is an aspect of the cold war that has been almost entirely hidden from the public. As you know, the U.S. Government still publishes lists of “strategic” and “critical” materials—metals, botanical products, and other substances on which our productive capacities are totally dependent. But you possibly do not know that the lists that are available to the public are by no means the ones that guide our national-security planners. Some of the substances on them are so rare and of such specialized use that nobody but metallurgists and chemists ever heard of them; yet they are indispensable to the hardening of steel, to making machinery resistant to high temperatures and acids, to the manufacture of electronic products, and for other such purposes. Despite herculean efforts by our scientists to find home-grown substitutes, many of them can be obtained only from abroad. It happens—and it could hardly happen by chance—that those areas of the world where the substances are to be found are exactly those in which local anti-American extremist groups enjoy the greatest monetary, logistical, and administrative support and which comprise the front line of “the people’s war against imperialism and capitalism.” Since the list of substances for obvious reasons must be kept top secret, together with the facts on how critically dependent we are on them, there is no way the U.S. Government can convey an awareness of the problem to the American public. Those who have access to the information can only writhe in discomfort as uninformed politicians and editorialists state with pious confidence their conviction that the U.S. Government should remain indifferent as countries containing the necessary substances turn hostile to American interests.

The CIA’s information on the internationalization of terrorist organizations is alarming, not so much because of what this information shows these organizations to be doing right now, as because of what it shows about the capabilities they are building to be kept in reserve for their D-Day. Radical activity inside the United States is largely “unstructured”; some of it results from the frustrations of unorganized or informally organized mi-

nority groups, some of it results from not-so-genuine frustrations of dissidents who have learned that terrorism can be effective in a permissive society. Inside it all, however, there is unquestionably purposeful direction. The objective is clear: to be able to paralyze the nation's shipping, communications, and manufacture of military matériel in the event we find ourselves in a war with the Soviet Union or with any country, like North Vietnam, that is supported by the Soviet Union. Achievement of the objective is a long way off—or obviously the antiwar demonstrations of recent years would have been more effective—but friends of mine at the FBI with whom I discussed the subject assure me that the capability is growing and that, moreover, we should not take encouragement from the fact that it hasn't been particularly impressive during the past few years. There is reason to believe, they tell me, that the Soviets are happy enough with the outcome of the Vietnam war, that they therefore didn't need to use their subversive resources in the United States, that they are quietly building them for the "Vietnams" of the future, into which they confidently expect to draw us.

"Invasions" of Privacy

Similarly, the CIA is concerned about the growth of "directed" terrorist activity, which is at the heart of all the random ad hoc terrorism that goes on all over the Third World, especially in those countries where strategic substances are located. But it also has to concern itself with the "unstructured" activity, since so much of it, however random it may be, directly and critically affects American interests. Airplane hijackings, kidnapping and murder of American diplomats, sabotage of refineries and pipelines, and assaults on foreigners who dare to be friendly to the U.S.—these must be taken seriously, not only because of the injury to specific victims but because of their psychological effect on all other potential victims. Take the Palestinian Black Septembrists, for example, who have announced that "any person, office, airline, factory, or place which is in any way related to the continued existence of Israel" may be a target of their terrorism. They have made it clear that American citizens, offices, airlines, factories, and places all fill the bill because America's friendship and aid has been

the sine qua non of Israel's continued existence.

What do you do when you have that much of yourself to guard? If the enemy is about to charge your Alamo, or send troops through your Khyber Pass, you defend. But how do you defend a million or so possible targets? The single most significant, inescapable fact about modern-day counterterrorism is this: It requires offense, not defense.



If you try to put guards around every conceivable target, you will have the most conspicuous police state in history and will play right into the hands of those who are launching "the people's war against imperialism and capitalism." Instead, you must go on the offensive. You must find out who your would-be attackers are, then sneak into their tents on the eve of their attacks and quietly deal with them. It's the only way.

Unfortunately, this means all sorts of invasions of privacy. In the good old days when "the enemy" was ordinary international Communism, with its clear-cut hierarchical arrangements and its systematic ties with the Soviet KGB, the work of our security and intelligence agencies not only was comparatively easy but involved the conventional kind of penetrations and surveillances at which they had become expert. Penetrate a Communist cell and work your way up. By the mid-Fifties

the FBI not only had all "card-carrying" Communists in the U.S. identified and "dataed," but had the Soviet intelligence services, the KGB and the military GRU, so thoroughly penetrated that it could actually influence their direction. The CIA was similarly placed with respect to the Communist parties in other countries and to the non-Communist Soviet-controlled espionage networks growing like weeds in the Third World. And all this involved a minimum invasion of privacy. Out of any ten "card-carrying Communists" only one was a link in the chain and worth watching, and he was easy to identify. The other nine, mere dupes, could be ignored. Today, however, the organizations or informal groupings from which the terrorists emerge have a dupe-to-activist ratio of about a hundred to one, and the one is usually hard to spot. To spot him, the FBI—or the CIA if he is in a foreign country—must maintain surveillance of a wide range of "subjects," most of them innocent.

CIA: No KGB

How wide a range of subjects? I am sure you have not missed the flood of accusations against the government's security agencies, the "repressive system" they have built up and the "Gestapo mentality" which is behind them. In early 1971, a so-called "Citizen's Committee To Investigate the FBI" stole a thousand or so documents from an FBI office in Philadelphia and gleaned from them the hardly startling revelation that the FBI systematically keeps files on persons who pose "a definite threat to the nation's stability and security," as J. Edgar Hoover had said in one of the documents. In the months that followed, it was revealed that the U.S. Army's counterintelligence office maintained files on "potentially subversive persons," that the Treasury Department's Secret Service had files "containing names and aliases of five thousand black people," as Jack Anderson put it, that the CIA was maintaining files on Americans who traveled into countries of particular intelligence interest and that these files contained entries concerning anything they did in the course of their travels which "might make them vulnerable to black mail pressures," and that all this information was fed into computer databanks where it would stay forever—along with information supplied by

police agencies (including records of parking tickets and other such misdemeanors), credit investigation agencies, and banks. In 1971, another columnist published an "admission" of the Defense Department that it had computerized security files on 25 million Americans and that the files included information not only on persons regarded as threats to security but on such public figures as George C. Wallace and George S. McGovern.

"True, all true," Mother told me, adding that the total number of files available to his office, thanks partly to his links with the Pentagon's computer but mostly to his own resources, is well over fifty million—a figure which is ten million over the total number of passports in existence in the whole world at any one time. The CIA's computerized files are so nearly complete that they can spot a suspect terrorist by his name, passport number, or description (by a newly devised system which pinpoints a person's permanent characteristics as precisely as a fingerprint)—or an alias or forged passport when these do not properly match. A card on any individual can be retrieved in less than a second. Mother proved this to me by raising a color slide of a young Palestinian terrorist I had inquired about. He pressed a few buttons giving the identifying details, and in less than a second the window lights had dimmed and the young swankie was staring at me from a color picture on the far wall.

Until Watergate, no one at CIA felt any need to apologize. After all, surveillance of Martin Luther King had been okayed by three Presidents, two of them Democrats, and various liberals who were about to complain of "Gestapo tactics" cut themselves short when it was revealed that Vice President Agnew's telephone had been tapped. After Watergate, however, there was all sorts of retroactive anger. It was even suggested that our record-keeping, our telephone-tapping, and our surveillance of ordinary citizens might horrify the Soviets and sour the burgeoning detente.

(You will remember that my inquiries in Washington were made just after Brezhnev had left. A friend of mine in the Secret Service told me that on the only occasion when the embarrassing subject of Watergate came up, someone remarked to Brezhnev that the FBI, the Treasury Department

agencies, and the local police tapped "about 4,000 telephones," a total which seemed perfectly reasonable to the Soviet leader—until it dawned on those present that he had understood the figure to be 400,000. After that, great care was taken not to allow the subject to come up again, because no one wanted to admit the true figure, thereby revealing to the hardened old intriguer that we were a lot of trusting fools with only an immature grasp of our security situation.)

Speculation

There is, of course, plenty of justification for anyone's fears that an all-knowing computer bank could become a dangerous instrument of power in the hands of an unscrupulous dictator. Even though it is unlikely that our country will ever allow itself to be ruled by an unscrupulous dictator, it is understandable that such a monstrous capability arouses the fears of all sorts of people. I don't mind having the details of my colorful life recorded in the CIA's computers, and I am sure you have the same feeling about yours, but it makes most people uneasy to feel that an unthinking and unforgetting computer has details of old childhood pranks, parking tickets, unpaid bills, and the like just sitting there waiting to be retrieved—maybe tomorrow, maybe twenty years from now. Ian Ball of the *London Daily Telegram* discovered that the computers of the Bureau of Narcotics contain data on three babies of under three years of age for having been exposed to narcotics by parental neglect. In twenty years or so when one of them applies for a government job, a government loan, or simply a passport, the information will be coughed up. "Obviously," said a Labor MP with whom I discussed the item on a BBC television program, "the amassing of such information is an intolerable invasion of privacy, and the computers should be destroyed."

But, obviously, they are not going to be destroyed—any more than our atomic know-how is going to be destroyed on some weird theory that other nations will follow suit and the self-inflicted ignorance will save us from World War III. We've now got the information, and we're going to keep it. Moreover, those governments under pressure to destroy their personnel

will probably turn it over to us—as, I am told, the British have already. The only satisfactory way to calm all the fears is to ensure that the information is entirely in the hands of incorruptible persons inside an incorruptible organization—a suggestion at which you have hinted in one or two articles.

If Watergate proves anything, it proves that the CIA is incorruptible. To support this seemingly rash assertion, the whole story of the friction between the CIA and the "plumbers," and the White House as a whole, needs to be told. Mind you, no single person at the Agency gave me a complete story, or showed any willingness to endorse the one I've put together here, and the bits and pieces I got from old friends were far from enough to free me from the necessity to do some speculating. I think, though, that the account I have put together is as complete as anyone is likely to get until Dick Helms writes his memoirs. In any case, there is enough hard information to support my rash assertion. Here goes.

It seems that President Nixon's "pre-occupation" (a word used by John Dean in his testimony) with the subject of radical groups and their supposed foreign connections became intense in 1969 when, among other things, he ordered the FBI to prepare a special report on groups in the U.S. receiving support from abroad and the CIA to prepare a report on foreign governments and groups supporting radical groups in America. The FBI complied; it supplied a preliminary report, to be followed a year later by a complete study, which alleged that there were indeed foreign influences at work in America, mainly among black extremists, but which was weak on specifics. The CIA, however, submitted a straight-faced report in which its experts admitted their ignorance. It simply said that it was following certain foreign groups intensively but as yet had no evidence of their ties in America. The report did not, as the *New York Times* and other papers have alleged, say that no such ties existed. Mother assures me that he has gone through every scrap of paper the Agency ever issued on the subject, both internally and externally, and that there is not one that says that radical groups in America were "homegrown, indigenous responses to perceived grievances and problems that had been

growing for years." All the same, the initial Agency report to the White House on the subject was pretty weak stuff—so much so as to cause Haldeman to remark that it was too much "maybe this maybe that."

During the next two years, the Agency furnished the White House with a series of papers on international terrorism, which were increasingly informative but contained little of the positive proof Mr. Haldeman and others were seeking. The writers could only express "strong suspicion" that contacts between foreign groups and certain domestic groups were in the process of being established, and they contained references which never failed to infuriate the President—references to the possibility that "normal social unrest" might be a contributing factor to the existence of radical groups and that they might well exist in some form even without foreign support. The Agency has since dropped this line, not to please the White House, but because the experts came to believe it beside the point—but White House irritation lingered.

The exchanges with the White House on radical groups were no more satisfactory from the Agency's point of view than from the White House's. The Agency Director, Dick Helms, went over to the White House several times to give oral briefings on the subject, and on each occasion he limped back to Langley with tremendous feelings of frustration because, as he told one of his subordinates, "the President keeps asking the wrong questions," and otherwise showing that instead of understanding the truly dangerous nature of terrorist groups, he persisted in seeing them in terms of campus disturbances, antiwar demonstrations, and other such nuisances. That wasn't all. As election time drew near, it became clearer and clearer that the White House wanted reports from the CIA and from everybody else only to support conclusions already reached, and the conclusions were ones that, with a little embellishment, could be made highly embarrassing to the Democratic Party.

All the while, the CIA's reports on radical groups throughout the world were getting better and better—that is, they contained more hard information that added up to a picture that made sense—but the summaries of those reports sent to the White House were more and more perfunctory. At the

same time the Agency's "theoretical" reporting on international relationships of the groups was shaping up nicely—for example, those reports that grew out of studies of "word patterns" in Maoist training manuals, speeches of New Left leaders, articles and editorials by writers suspected of New Left associations, and so on, were beginning to suggest group-to-group and person-to-group connections which were confirmed



by follow-up inquiries. One conclusion of a report resulting from a word-pattern study was that a member of Senator McGovern's staff used words and phrases in a way peculiar to secret Soviet manuals for guidance of propagandists and that his talk and writing reflected a certain knowledge that could only have come as the result of intensive study of those manuals.

The Plumbers

This find—or rather this "tentative conclusion," because proof to back it was never found—signaled the end of any serious reporting the CIA might have done for the White House on the subject of radical groups. Had a report of that sort come to the attention of President Eisenhower during his first term of office—that is, a report suggesting that one of Adlai Stevenson's aides might be a Communist agent—the first person he would have told about it would have been Mr. Stevenson, Dick Helms and others at the Agency suspected that if they sent the White House a report suggesting that Senator McGovern might have a Communist in his camp, the Senator would

hear about it only under circumstances that would embarrass him the most. So no more reports on personalities went to the White House from the CIA.

By that time the White House didn't care; it had already hired an assortment of misfits and organized them into a special unit later to be known as "the plumbers." To the FBI and the CIA, the plumbers at first admitted only one function: to sniff out leaks to the press emanating from the White House. One of the misfits, however, one Howard Hunt, confided to former associates at the Agency that the main reason for the formation of the unit was the President's dissatisfaction with the reporting of the FBI and the CIA on radical groups, and that the unit would have a second function: to identify leaders of radical groups that were particularly embarrassing to the President and his policies. And a third: to get derogatory information on Democratic presidential aspirants, and any other information that would help President Nixon to get re-elected, and to carry out certain "black" operations to see that the Democratic campaign went the way President Nixon wanted it to go. Hunt confided to his friends at CIA that there would be no quibbling over the fact that the plumbers' unit was at the same time working for the White House and for CREEP, since it was regarded by Haldeman, Ehrlichman, and the others as being "among the resources of the incumbency," i.e., one of the natural advantages enjoyed by a candidate running for an office he already held.

I am told that Hunt passed on this confidence some time before the Agency's Deputy Director, General Walters, lent him all that equipment. Although General Walters didn't know about it, and lent the equipment in good faith, since he knew Hunt was under orders of the White House and he himself was unaware of the reprehensible Third Function, I'm afraid this excuse doesn't let the Agency off the hook. More than one Agency member admitted to me that the thought of Hunt breaking into the office of Dan Ellsberg's psychiatrist wearing that red wig would have been irresistible—or "too much," as Lady Windermere, the CIA costumed, put it to me over Sunday afternoon tea in her Georgetown apartment. From what I heard about Hunt, I'm sure I wouldn't have been able to resist—especially since

there was every possibility that he would make the entry in some Abbott and Costello fashion and get himself and his associates caught.

As every red-blooded American must have already figured out for himself, the FBI already had quietly photocopied the psychiatrist's files, just as it may be presumed to have photocopied quietly every other extant document in the United States that may give clues leading to who is and who is not working for the Soviets (Haldeman and Ehrlichman, remember, were convinced that Ellsberg definitely *was* a Soviet agent, so Ellsberg has the FBI to thank for giving them doubts). A red-blooded American could also understand that even had Hunt been caught in "fragrant delectus," as my FBI friend said, the incident would have rated a couple of paragraphs in the *Washington Post* and that would have been the end of it, were it not for all the other parts of the scandal. What is so frightening is that the White House would hire Hunt for anything.

As I remember Hunt, he is a nice enough guy who is such a romantic that he would possibly like to have a criminal turn of mind (it would help in his role of novelist) but he is deplorably lacking in one. He had never been a CIA agent; he was 100 per cent a desk man, whose operational experience consisted of kibitzing, from an administrative standpoint, some of the operations into Cuba. "I wouldn't have trusted him to steal an apple from a Covent Garden fruit market," one of his former superiors told me, while swearing that the White House employed Hunt without bothering to ask anyone at the Agency about him. "If Haldeman or anybody else had called to ask, 'What about Hunt?' we would have laughed," he said.

The same goes for the other key figures in the Watergate break-in—except Jim McCord. McCord is entirely a "security wallah," as the supercilious eggheads in Summaries call those faceless men who make the rounds of Langley offices after working hours in quest of safes left open, top-secret papers left on desks, and ribbons left on typewriters. McCord was their over-all supervisor, and he brought considerable imagination to what is normally a totally routine job—for example, he set the traps which caught a secretary in Summaries red-handed in the act of removing papers to take to a crusading

Washington columnist. Also, he distinguished himself in the eyes of Dick Helms on an occasion when a Dutch manufacturer of electronic gadgetry was demonstrating some ultrasophisticated electronic "sneakies." The Dutch salesman announced that over twenty items of gadgetry had been hidden in the exhibition room and invited his CIA guests to find them. They looked and they couldn't find a single one. Then the Dutchman set about to uncover them, and *he* couldn't find them. Jim McCord had sneaked into the room before the demonstration, found them all, and removed them. "Jim is one fine operator," said Helms, the guest of honor on this occasion.

A Set-Up?

So how did one fine operator like McCord get himself involved in the Watergate mess? Do you know how long it takes for a CIA-trained operator to get into an office like the one in Watergate, install a microphone, and get the hell out? It takes less than one minute, and it requires a team of exactly two persons, the operator and a lookout. But at Watergate, Jim McCord, who had undergone the training and knew the procedure, had entered the Democratic offices with Abbott, Costello, the four Marx brothers, and the Keystone Cops, and had horsed around for almost half an hour without a lookout. (I am told on good authority that Hunt and Liddy were *not* waiting outside but had for some reason left the scene.) Although no one at Langley would come right out and admit it, the laughs, the grotesquely affected looks of innocence, and the genuine looks of pleasure that appeared on everyone's face whom I asked, "What *really* happened at Watergate?" convince me that, with or without explicit instructions from someone in the Agency, McCord took Hunt and Liddy into a trap. After all, the CIA specialists in operations of the plumbers' kind had a lot to gain from putting the White House's clowns out of business. The ultimate consequences were a high price to pay, but, after all, it wasn't the Agency that had to pay it.

Every so often, the Director of the CIA, the "DCI," gives a non-order like the one attributed to Henry II, "Who will free me from this turbulent priest?" Maybe the hint is picked up down the line

the Agency's system of "fuses," which makes the Agency almost totally impervious to anyone's efforts to corrupt it. Here is the way the fuses work.

Let us say, for the sake of example, that the President orders the CIA Director to send some of his boys out to follow Senator Ervin as he makes his usual rounds of Washington nightclubs. The Director, let us say for the sake of example, is a weak chap who prefers holding onto his job to being sent off to Teheran as ambassador, so he says, "Yessir, Mr. President," and returns to his office to comply. Since he can hardly be expected to conduct the surveillance personally, he passes the order to the chief of some division most likely to have surveillance facilities inside the U.S. Like the DCI, the division chief cannot himself conduct the surveillance, so he has to call in some members of his staff to make plans for the surveillance, someone else to choose the personnel to carry it out. Moreover, since he can't move or equip personnel without the concurrence of the over-all operations officer who works directly for the "DDP," the head of the "dirty tricks department," he has to bring yet another four or five officers into the operation. If he *doesn't* do all this (if, for example, the DCI has instructed him to bypass the usual procedures), the personnel who are to conduct the actual surveillance will refuse to move—since every one of them is working for the CIA as an organization and not for the Director personally, and knows full well that taking action without a "trip ticket," i.e., a written order endorsed by some four or five "controls," is a sure way of getting fired.

Blowing a Fuse

So what happens? The DCI, hot from the White House, calls in the Chief of Division X and orders him to get cracking on a surveillance of Senator Ervin. The Chief of Division X, also a weakling who likes his job (let us say), calls in his plans officer and his operations officer and passes the word on to them. And so on and so on. Sooner or later, at least one officer down the line either says no, with adequate means at his disposal for making the no stick, or he "loses the papers," as the old-timers say. And since those in the act are certain that at least one of their number will act as the fuse and "blow," it is quite

how, the word goes back to the DCI either: 1) that the operation was launched but ran into difficulties and had to be abandoned; 2) that it couldn't be run except in a way that would involve risks of disclosure that might embarrass the White House; 3) that the operation has been launched, when it in fact hasn't, but isn't producing anything worthwhile; 4) that—well, any one of a dozen or more excuses, the more far-fetched the better, since the boys down the line don't want to run the risk of causing the Director to believe their excuses. Once he has caught the point that they are only trying to protect him, along with the Agency, they can sit down with him to concoct an excuse plausible enough for the White House. But they never, never explicitly refuse to carry out his command, or tell him anything that would "involve" him, as that ominous word is now being used around Washington. It is a sort of "turbulent priest" treatment in reverse.

I am told that the press has uncovered only a fraction of the "requests" made of the CIA by the White House. The Agency was asked to follow up on investigations the FBI was supposed to be making but was found out not to be making; it was asked to have prominent Democrats followed when they made visits abroad; it was asked to "cooperate" with the Internal Revenue Service in maintaining surveillance of numbered Swiss bank accounts—presumably in the hope of spotting the odd Democrat in the act of "laundering" his funds. On one occasion, Jojo's office was asked for an LSD-type drug, developed by the Chinese and being studied by CIA chemists, which could be slipped into the lemonade of Democratic orators, thus causing them to say sillier things than they would say anyhow. To this day, some of my friends at the Agency are convinced that Howard Hunt or Gordon Liddy or somebody got hold of a variety of the drug and slipped it into Senator Muskie's lemonade before his famous weeping scene. After long harassment by such requests, it is easy to imagine that when Howard Hunt asked for that wig the Deputy Director shrugged, said "what the hell," and gave it to him.

But there was another reason why Agency officers could have felt it entirely proper to lend equipment, provided it was not too expensive. It was Hunt. According to CIA policy, when

the appropriate officer gets a request for material assistance from another responsible agency—or, certainly, from the White House—he carefully refrains from asking what the material is to be used for. In the case of Hunt, it would have been silly to say to someone with White House credentials, "Just a minute, old man. Before we lend you this wig we want to know exactly what you are going to do with it. A fancy dress ball, maybe?" More important, whoever did the lending would quite rightly fear some weird answer—and, having got it, would then have the choice of turning down a request from the White House or lending the material knowing what it was to be used for, thus associating himself with a lunatic project.

At the same time, Agency officers are not averse to accepting information volunteered—especially information on the doings of an organization that was endangering its mission. Hunt had never been an "agent" during the time he was actually employed by the CIA, but he became one after he had retired, an agent inside the plumbers—an expendable one (unlike McCord), but nonetheless an agent. He was therefore worth humoring.

If you've ever had the experience of giving information to the CIA, you know how impassive its professionals can be: They listen with friendly interest, making you feel that what you say is of the greatest importance, but they are totally noncommittal. You have no idea whether or not you are being believed, or whether there is approval or disapproval of what you are saying. I doubt therefore that Hunt sensed the fascinated horror with which his former associates at the Agency listened to his stories of the plumbers. Because they were all amateurs (what Ehrlichman said in his testimony about their being "experienced operatives" is far from the truth), and because they had wild imaginations, the plumbers were capable of almost any kind of nonsense. At first, it seemed that their imaginations and bumbling would confine them to "dirty tricks" to win the campaign—rather than lead them into the kind of mess they did in fact get into.

Until the day of the Haldemans and the Ehrlichmans the Agency's integrity had never been challenged, and perhaps the system was getting lax. From now on, to fail to question a doubtful order is, possibly, even, in the eyes of the person

who gives the order. Many orders will be given by senior officials under pressure who know they can count on someone down the line to "lose the papers." The officer down the line who fails to spot incidents where he is supposed to lose the papers will, as before, be beyond explicit punishment, but he will thereafter suffer "inconveniences." Since there are no stupid people in the Agency, it will be assumed that he is being malicious, that he is practicing that bit of CIA operational mischief, "the most subtle form of insubordination is to take a stupid order and carry it out to the letter." I well remember Mother's once having to "inconvenience" a smart-ass young officer who, at the time of one of the numerous flaps over chemical-warfare stores, received an order to "destroy all supplies of special drugs," and did exactly that, burning up a million dollars or so worth of sodium pentothal, LSD, aphrodisiacs, and other operational goodies, together with their "balancers." This sort of nonsense is not likely to be repeated.

No Need to Worry

More important, the public can count on the Agency not to use its operational goodies—except, of course, in instances where it is clearly in the interest of national security for it to do so. It has all sorts of weird and wonderful gadgets, chemicals, and what-not, mainly because the Soviets and the Chinese have them, and it cannot afford to be without complete knowledge of them. The same goes for the masses of personality data which it has in its files, the mere existence of which could be "an invasion of privacy." To Agency officers, to destroy such information in deference to this notion would be comparable to suppression of knowledge in the Middle Ages because it was somehow contrary to the religious beliefs of the time. Thus, the CIA is going to hold on to its know-how, its special equipment, and its knowledge, and if Bill Colby gets orders to destroy them, someone down the line can be counted on to "lose the papers." At the same time, no one need worry that they will be misused—or even used. I'm not so sure the Agency will do anything right in the future; but my researches of the past few weeks convince me that it will never, never do anything wrong.